

REMARKS

A reconsideration is respectfully requested of Claims 1-16, wherein Claims 1, 15 and 16 have been amended.

By way of the foregoing amendments to the drawings, the objections in paragraph 2 have been addressed. In particular, the reference 513 has been removed now from Figure 6. With regard to the objections indicated in paragraph 3 of the Official Action, Applicant respectfully submits that these corrections have already been made. However, should the Examiner believe that further amendments are needed, the Applicant respectfully requests that the undersigned be contacted to discuss these amendments. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objections to the drawings is respectfully requested.

With regard to the objection to the disclosure in paragraph 6 of the Official Action, Applicants notes that the element 513 has been removed from Figures 5 and 6. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection to the disclosure is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,613,955 to *Lindsay et al.*

The present invention, as defined in Claims 1, 15 and 16, pertains to an absorbent product and method for using an absorbent product. Applicant notes that Claims 1, 15 and 16 have all been amended to more specifically recite that the elevation portion consists of a hydrogel. An elevation portion consisting of hydrogel solves the problem of mucus membranes drying out during use of the absorbent article, as the elevation after wetting will always have a moist surface, wherein the

wetting occurs when the hydrogel comes into contact with the mucus membranes.

The mucus membranes are thereby "kept moist during use and the risk of chafing and other irritation of the mucus membranes is virtually wholly eliminated" (See page 14, paragraph 43 of the present application).

In contrast, the absorbent article cited in *Lindsay et al.* has an uppermost surface consisting of material not capable of being gentle to sensitive areas, such as a mucus membranes, due to the inherent dryness of the material. That is to say, the absorbent articles are designed to show good characteristics towards skin which is to be kept dry in contrast to mucus membranes which are to be moist.

For example, the humps disclosed in reference WO 98/22057 are formed with a first portion 104' covered with a liquid-pervious cover layer 102. The liquid-pervious cover layer 102 is made of a conventional material which, as explained on page 8, line 25 to page 9, line 3, is designed such that the surface remains dry during use. In fact, the absorbent article of WO 98/22057 teaches away from the absorbent article as claimed, as WO 98/22057 teaches the importance of maintaining a dry surface in the article. Additionally, the conventional material from which the liquid-pervious cover layer is made would not, even if soaked in liquid, be able to exhibit the advantageous liquid-pertaining characteristics of the hydrogel.

In addition, the claimed absorbent article exhibits an improved fit and increased leakage security, as a consequence of the hydrogel after wetting, due to the inherent characteristics of the hydrogel being able to adhere to the mucus membranes. A surface of an absorbent article being designed of conventional materials does not, either in dry or wet conditions, exhibits such adhering

characteristics. Accordingly, none art of record disclose the patentable features of independent Claim 1.

For at least the foregoing reasons it is submitted that the product and method of independent Claims 1, 15 and 16, and the claims depending therefrom, is patentably distinguishable over the applied documents. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejections of record and allowance of this application are earnestly solicited.

Should any questions arise in connection with this application, or should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference would be helpful in resolving any remaining issues pertaining to this application, the undersigned respectfully requests that she be connected at the number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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